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Mattawan student dies from injuries after struck by vehicle

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

PORTER TWP.- A 10-year-old Mattawan Consolidated School student died from injuries he received Thursday, Nov. 13, when he was struck by a vehicle near a school bus stop, according to a press release from the VanBuren County Sheriff's Office.

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott said Van Buren County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to a report of a car versus pedestrian crash at approximately 8:12 a.m. in the 72000 block of 22nd Street in Porter Township.

Upon arrival, Lawton Quick Response, Van Buren Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Van Buren County Sheriff's Office deputies immediately started providing medical aid to the 10-year-old child who had been struck near a school bus stop.

Sheriff Abbott said the initial investigation revealed that a Mattawan Consolidated School bus had been traveling northbound on 22nd Street preparing to stop for a student when the incident occurred. The driver of a white SUV, a 38-year-old female, reported that she struck the child, who had been crossing the roadway after checking a family mailbox. The driver immediately called 911 following the collision.

The child was treated at the scene by emergency personnel and then transported to Bronson Hospital for further medical care.

The Van Buren County Accident Reconstruction Unit responded to conduct a detailed investigation. The incident remains under investigation by the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office.

Mattawan Consolidated School District Superintendent Randy Fleenor released a prepared statement later that day which read: "Dear Families and Community, It is with great sorrow that we share an update regarding this morning's accident.

"Despite the efforts of first responders and medical professionals, the Later Elementary student involved in the incident has passed away. We extend our deepest and most sincere condolences to one of our own Wildcat families during this unimaginable and heartbreaking time.

"The district has assembled its crisis team to determine next steps in providing ongoing support to our school community. Additional counseling and support services will be available for students and staff as we navigate the days ahead.

"We ask you to keep this family, and all who are impacted, in your thoughts during this profoundly difficult time."

VETERANS DAY SERVICES HELD IN AREA TOWNS

Despite snow and temperatures in the 20s, area towns held Veterans Day ceremonies on Nov. 11. At Paw Paw, the Paw Paw American Legion McGowan-Johnson Post 68, held a ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park. At Lawrence, the Lawrence High School Band performed at Lawrence Veterans Memorial at Hill Cemetery during a service conducted by the Lawrence American Legion Hess-Eastman Post 174.
Photos courtesy/Paul DeYoung and Lawrence Public Schools

New Lawrence Township Fire Chief named

William "Bill" Firestone was recently named the new Lawrence Township Fire Chief, following his selection by the Lawrence Township Board. Firestone will receive a base salary of $48,000 plus benefits for 32 hours. Department member James Fine will be paid $25 per hour for eight hours, in case of Firestone's absence. Firestone is a captain on the Covert Township Fire Department and EMS. He and his wife, Kristen, a Van Buren County Sheriff's Office dispatcher, reside in Lawrence.
Courier-Leader photo/ Paul Garrod

Paul DeYoung to be honored by Paw Paw DDA

PAW PAW - Van Buren County Register of Deeds Paul De Young has been announced by the Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority (DDA) as the inaugural recipient of the Community Ambassador Award. DeYoung will be honored Friday, Dec. 12, during the all-new Paw Paw Children's Lighted Parade that will step off at 6 p.m.

DeYoung and his wife, Anita, have five grown children, Sean, Andrea, Christopher, Colin, and Stephen; and six grandchildren.

DeYoung joined the Van Buren Register of Deeds Office in 2012 and is currently serving his fourth term as Register of Deeds.

Prior to that, he operated his own business for 10 years as an electrical and electronic distributor in Paw Paw, with over 20 years of experience in the construction distribution industry.

DeYoung was born and raised in Kalamazoo and graduated from Kalamazoo Christian High School. He obtained his associates degree from Kalamazoo Valley Community College. He later attended Calvin College and Western Michigan University. He earned his Certified County Officer certificate in 2018, and Master Certified County Officer certificate in 2025.

In addition to serving as an elected county official representing over 75,000 constituents, He is chairman of the Van Buren County Remonumentation Committee, chairman of the Van Buren County Plat Board, chairman of the Van Buren County Building Authority, vice chair of the Van Buren County Land Bank Authority, and a member of the Village of Paw Paw Economic and Residential Opportunities Commission. He is also a member of the Michigan Association of Registers of Deeds (MARD), United County Officers Association (UCOA), Property Records Industry Association (PRIA), a statutory member of the Van Buren Republican Committee, a merit badge counselor for Paw Paw Scout Troop 169, a member of three local chambers of commerce, the Paw Paw Knights of Columbus, the Paw Paw Conservation Club, Van Buren Farm Bureau, and a member of St. Mary Church, Paw Paw.

DeYoung is past president of Michigan Association of Registers of Deeds, past Waverly Township representative to the Paw Paw Fire Board, past president and director of the Paw Paw Chamber of Commerce, past executive board member of Paw Paw Middle School PTO, past Paw Paw AYSO coach, past Paw Paw Youth Baseball assistant coach, past Paw Paw Middle School Ski Club assistant, and past member of the Paw Paw Schools Superintendent advisory committee.

In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family, volunteering, attending community and local governmental functions, boating, and downhill skiing.

Area Food Pantry receives $1,000 grant

The Gobles-Kendall Area Ministerial Association Food Pantry was a recipient of a $1,000 grant from the Ben Crooks Agency and the Agent Charitable Fund – Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan. Shown in photo, at left, is Ben Crooks, and Sheila Baker, representing the Gobles – Kendall Area Ministerial Association Food Pantry.
Photo courtesy/GKAMA

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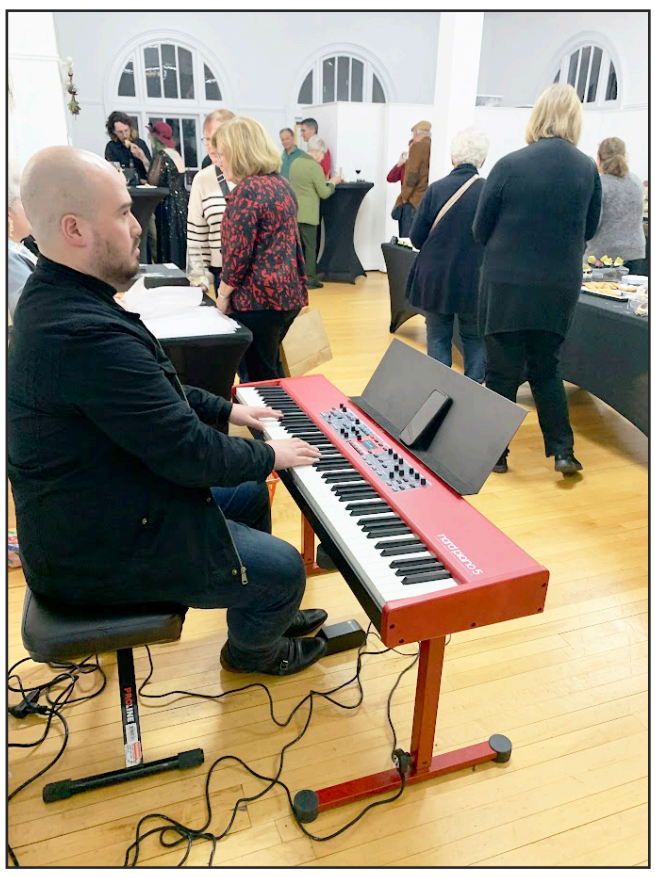
Mistletoe Market at the South Haven Center for the Arts returns for the 39th Year



By James Windell

The South Haven Center for the Arts hosts an opening preview party for this year's Mistletoe Market on Friday, November 21, 2025.

Featuring live music, hors d'oeuvres, door prizes, and fun at the opening night party for the 39th annual Mistletoe Market, it's a fine art and artisan holiday show that will run from November 22 through December 14.

The Executive Director of the Center for the Arts, Kerry Hagy, says that the theme of this year's Mistletoe Market is snow globes. "We'll have snow globe decorations that you can buy," Hagy says, "and Café Julia is making a sugar snow globe that will be auctioned off as a door prize."

For the market, Hagy points out, there will be art and handmade goods on the main floor level of the gallery. "Upstairs though we'll have six artists' booths with their work, including a card-making station so people can make their own cards," she says. "Cafe Julia will have a buffet, David McDonald will be playing the piano, and there will be drinks. Opening night will be a fun party."

Amy Kilbridge, one of several Center for the Arts volunteers who are helping to set up the Mistletoe Market, says that there will be many exciting things for people to buy. "We have wood spoons and ladles which are very exciting," she says, "and there will be all kinds of ornaments, beach glass art, colorful wreaths, jewelry, pottery, glass trees for Christmas decorations, and ceramics. This will be a great opportunity for people who need to decorate for the holidays or who need to buy gifts. There is just so much here that is beautiful and artistic."

Hagy says that throughout the market, which lasts until December 14, there will be workshops people can attend. "There will be several workshops during the market," she explains. "For instance, we have Vanessa Ray, a new teacher working us, and she's making Christmas Tree hats. But there will also be a quilling class, paper arts and make-your-own earrings class."

The opening night Preview Party will be on Friday, November 21, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Center for the Arts, 600 Phoenix, South Haven. Admission for the Preview Party is $20 for Members and $25 for Non-Members.

The days and hours for the Mistletoe Market will be Saturday, November, 22, 11 am to 4pm; Sunday, November 23, 11am to 4pm; Friday, November 28, 11 am to 4pm; Saturday, November 29, 11 am to 4 pm; Sunday, November 30, 11 am to 4 pm; Wednesday, December 3, 11 am to 4pm; Thursday, December 4, 11 am to 6 pm; Friday, December 5, 11 am to 4 pm; Saturday, December 6, 11 am to 4pm; Sunday, December 7, 11 am to 4 pm; Wednesday, December 10, 11 am to 4 pm; Thursday, December 11, 11 am to 6pm; Friday, December 12, 11 am to 4 pm; Saturday, December 13, 11 am to 4 pm; and Sunday, December 14, 11 am to 4 pm.

For more information, visit the South Haven Center for the Arts website at // www.southhavenarts.org

Hartford observes Veterans Day

The Hartford American Legion Post 533 and the Hartford Fire Department sponsored a Veterans Day Tribute, Monday night, Nov. 11, at the Hartford Fire Department. Guest speaker was Hartford City Manager Nicol Pullium. The Lawrence Boy Scouts demonstrated proper flag folding and retirement. Photos courtesy/Paul DeYoung

Patriot's Pen student winners announced

The 2025 Patriot's Pen Paw Paw Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2532 winners were announced on Veterans Day, Nov 11, during a ceremony held at Paw Paw Middle School. Shown in photo from left, Paw Paw VFW 2532 Commander James Alden; Third Place, Gavin Krause; first place, Autumn Call; Second Place, Natalie Reinbach; and teacher Darl Vander Meulen. Photo courtesy/Paw Paw VFW 2532

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2ND FRONT PAGE

Children allegedly start garage fire

SHAES responders quickly confined and extinguished a fire that consumed a garage and nearby items at a residence on Jones Avenue in the city of South Haven on Friday night. Children playing with combustible materials are believed to have started the fire. No injuries were reported. The nearby residence was not damaged.

Craft shows to feature quilts drawing

The Paw Paw Lions Club will sponsor a craft fair on Nov. 22 from 10-3. There will be 24 craft and bakery vendors as well as representatives from some community service organizations. Free Admission for all. A concession stand will be available to purchase food.

The next week, November 29, the Decatur 43th Annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Show will be held from 9-4. It is sponsored by the Decatur Athletic Boosters. All proceeds go directly to the Athletic Boosters general fund to purchase uniforms & equipment. Lunch is available throughout the day.

The women from Paw Paw Presbyterian, and Decatur Presbyterian (soon to be Pine Street Presbyterian) have been working on Christmas decorations, a bake sale presentation, and the very popular quilt drawing. This will be at both shows.

The full-size quilt was hand sown by the Amish women, and the smaller lap quilt, with the beautiful cardinal on it, was made by Karen Makay. Tickets are for sale now from the women from both churches, and also will be available until the drawing on Saturday afternoon, on the 29th.

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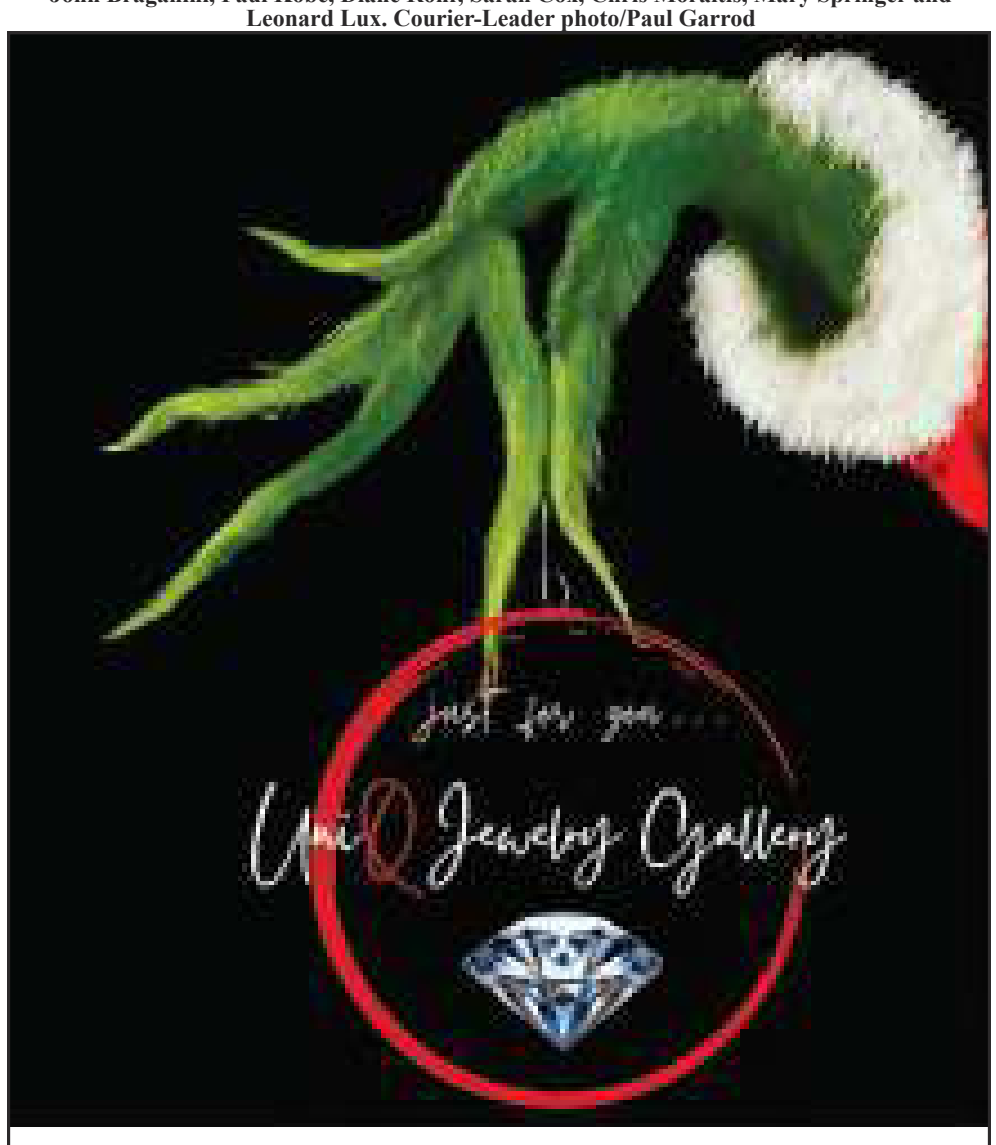
Tree restored in front of Carnegie building, Paw Paw

A tree planting/ribbon cutting ceremony was held Nov. 6, to celebrate the planting of a new tree in front of the Carnegie building, Paw Paw. The tree was donated by Wahmhoff Farms, Gobles, and planted by Kobe Nurseries, Paw Paw. The tree, a 10 - 12-foot Concolor Fir (or white fir) will replace a large spruce tree that was blown down during a June storm. Shown in photo from left, are Mary Beth Sons, Paul DeYoung, Steve Richardson, Roman Plaszczak, Sarah Braganini, John Braganini, Paul Kobe, Diane Rohr, Sarah Cox, Chris Moraitis, Mary Springer and Leonard Lux. Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod



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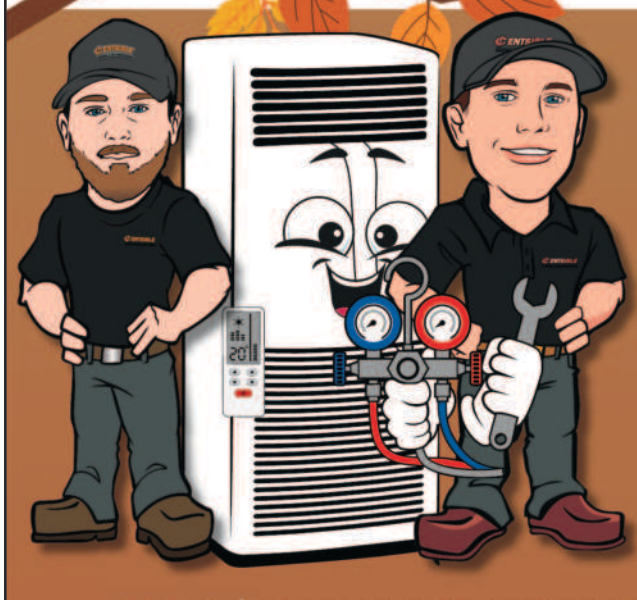

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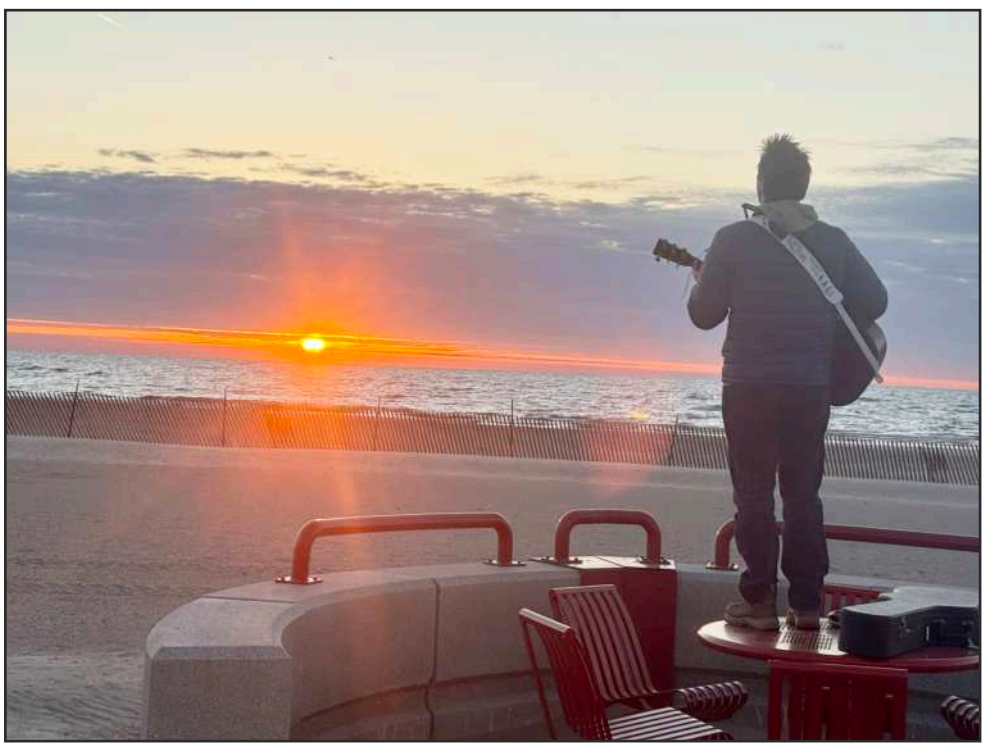
Guitarist inspired by sunset



Spectacular sunset along South Haven's South Beach is an invitation for solo guitar player on a recent night. Photo by Tom Renner

Wine and Harvest Festival supporter honored

Lounsbury Excavating, Inc., Paw Paw, recently received a plaque of appreciation from the Paw Paw Wine & Harvest Festival for its support of the festival. Shown in photo representing Lounsbury are, from left, Morgan Drozd, Cindy O'Brien, Tara Nisenson, and Shelby Charles. Photo courtesy/Paw Paw Wine & Harvest Festival

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Decatur's Hard Times to re-open

Hard Times, known for its friendly service and hearty comfort food, is reopening under new ownership in January 2026. Posted on Facebook was a message from the new owners, the Walkers.

Hard Times Family Restaurant Announces Grand Reopening Under New Ownership!

Decatur - November 13th, 2025

The rumors are true! Hard Times Family Restaurant, a beloved community staple located at 108 North Phelps in Decatur, has been purchased by David and Lori Walker. The new owners are excited to announce that the restaurant is scheduled to reopen in January 2026.

"We're thrilled to bring Hard Times Family Restaurant back to life," said David and Lori Walker. "Our goal is to once again provide our patrons with the same warm, welcoming atmosphere and great homecooked meals that generations of families in Decatur have come to love."

As many may know, Lori grew up in Decatur her entire life and has worked at Hard Times for over 40 years, side by side with the restaurant's original founder and close friend, Deb Tuka.

Her lifelong connection to the restaurant and dedication to the community make this reopening especially meaningful for the Walker family and all who have called Hard Times their home away from home.

The Walkers also wish to extend their heartfelt thanks to Dan and Janice Benson for working closely with them throughout the purchase process. "Their support and cooperation made this transition smooth and meaningful," said the Walkers. "We're grateful for their trust and for the opportunity to carry on the Hard Times legacy."

In addition, we cannot thank the community of Decatur enough for the incredible support and encouragement we have received so far. The outpouring of kindness and excitement from friends, neighbors, and loyal patrons has truly inspired us as we prepare to reopen Hard Times and welcome everyone back through the doors.

The Walkers invite everyone to join them when the doors reopen this January — whether you're an old friend or a new face, you'll always be greeted with a smile and a delicious meal made with care.

Hard Times Family Restaurant
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The parade will step off at 6 p.m., escorting Santa to town, and will end with the community tree lighting ceremony. Line-up will begin at 4:30 p.m.
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destinationpawpaw.org
EVENTS ARE SPONSORED BY THE PAW PAW DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND LOCAL DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

Lawrence Twp receives Sunlight award

Lawrence Township recently received a Sunlight Award from the Michigan Fair Elections Institute. It recognized Lawrence Township with the award as a Responsive Advocate for exemplary service in maintaining accurate voter registration records and cooperation in addressing duplicate registrations. "We are honored by this recognition of our commitment to clean and transparent election administration on behalf of Lawrence Township residents," said Clerk Tracie Rindfield, shown above. Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

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SPORTS

South Haven keeper reflects on solid season

Alex Jaimes enjoys a strong moment during the season.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Alex Jaimes greatly enjoy his senior season as goalkeeper for South Haven's soccer team.

South Haven ended its season as state runners-up.

"The team performed excellently throughout the season," Jaimes said. "I have stepped up when my team has needed me the most. Since last year, I have improved in multiple areas, such as goalkicks, punts, and my shot-stopping abilities. I was the goalkeeper and the captain of the team.

"My role hasn't changed since my freshman year. I have played this position since I was around eight years old. My strengths would be leading my team and keeping them under control when emotions got high, and organizing my whole defense throughout the game."

Jaimes said he worked on everything during the offseason to improve and make it this far.

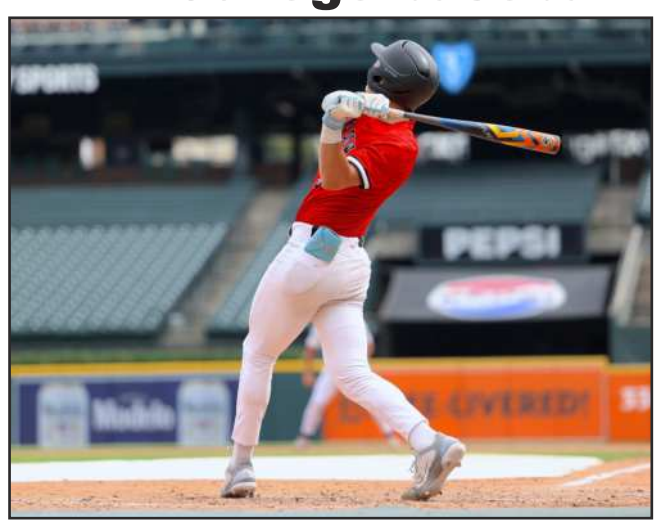
"I went to the gym five days a week, played indoor and outdoor, to keep experiencing new situations to apply them to the season," he said. "My best performances would be against Paw Paw in the semi-finals of districts, regional finals, and the state final, where I had plenty of outstanding saves, helping the team.

"Some team highlights would be beating Vicksburg and Rockford on senior night, both very tough opponents, where I saw the team connect a lot. I think I finally met my expectations. I had always been told that I was a very good goalkeeper, but I wanted to further prove it and gain the full recognition of the team. The team has exceeded expectations. Lots of teams underestimated us from last year, so we proved them wrong this year."

His only sport is soccer.

"My favorite sport is soccer," he said. I have been playing it since I was born. I will keep on practicing to hopefully play in college."

Former Paw Paw athlete continues college baseball career



By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw native Jake Hindenach is looking forward to his sophomore collegiate baseball team at a new location.

Hindenach's freshman year was 2021 at Paw Paw and his senior season was 2024. He was all conference as early as his sophomore season and was an all-stater at Paw Paw.

For the 2025 collegiate season, Hindenach was a pitcher at Kellogg Community College. He appeared in eight games,

"We ended up going to the junior college World Series in Oklahoma, which was a lot of fun," Hindenach recalled. "We wound up seventh."

Hindenach was a pitcher at Kellogg Community College. He has transferred to Jackson College.

"The reason I'm transferring is I'm looking to hit again," he said "I hit really well in high school. I was only a pitcher at Kellogg. I didn't get a lot of innings. It was my first time being a pitcher only. It was a hard transition to make and it didn't go the way I wanted it to go. That's where I did well in high school.

"Going to the college World Series was huge. It was back-to-back for Kellogg. That was the highlight of the year."

Hindebach said Jackson College "has had their eye on me since high school. They always wanted me as a hitter. That was a decision I made at the end of the year. I decided I didn't want to go back and be a pitcher at Kellogg. The coaches there felt like a good fit for me and I made that a decision. I'm an incoming sophomore.

"Jackson College has won their conference. They've had a lot of guys transfer to four-year schools. I was a good hitter in high school. I had eight home runs my senior year. It was a matter of attacking the ball and being aggressive at the plate and having a disciplined mindset. I'm looking forward to hitting again."

He's in business management.

Gobles junior runner continues to succeed

Ava DeYoung had a strong running season for Gobles.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

GOBLES — Ava DeYoung is coming off another outstanding cross country season for Gobles and is looking forward to the spring campaign and track and field.

DeYoung was a junior runner for Gobles this fall. Her PR was 19:48.2 for a third place finish during a conference jamboree. She was ninth at the regional and 79th at the Division 3 state meet.

DeYoung was coming off a very impressive track and field season in the spring.

"Our team performed very well this year, earning first in multiple meets, won the SAC, got second at the Regonals, and fifth at team state," DeYoung said. "Overall, this year was very successful and we all improved so much together. Although this track season I was not able to perform how I would have liked to in long distances, I was able to try other events. This year I competed in the 200, 400,4x200 and 4x400.

"Towards the end of the season I was forced to only run in the relay; the team needed me to run due to another stress fracture in my right leg. Even with the pain, I was able to get fifth at state in the 4x200 and 10t in the 4x400. I feel that I was able to improve more in the shorter events than the longer ones, getting m split down in both the 4x200 and 4x400 and coming down from getting a consistent time of 62 seconds by the end of the season."

DeYoung added, "my biggest role on the team this year was being put where ever the team needed me to be at. If they needed me to run a certain race to gain points, then that is what I ran even if it was a race I wasn't familiar with. My role is very different than last year because this year I was able to compete. Last year I dealt with a stress fracture in the beginning of the season and wasn't able to race the entire season. This year I was blessed to be able and perform and finish the entire season with only a few restrictions toward the end.

"My main fundamental strength as a performer would be the resilience to push through any pain I may be feeling. Even though I was feeling the pain of the stress fracture I was still able to continue competing for my team. This year I work on being able to adapt to other events that I'm not used to or haven't run before."

DeYoung said some of her more memorable moments of the track season were running and watching the team compete in the 4x400.

"This is the last event and always the most intense and exciting event," she said. "Another memorable moment is to be able to compete in individual state this season. It was an amazing experience for me and I am very grateful that I was able to perform in this meet.

"Every year team state is always such a fun and memorable moment for each of us; being able to perform not for our own time and placement but for our overall team score and our teammates. Everybody's mindset is focusing on how many points we can get for our team and not how our events go individually."

Chalupa a versatile athlete for Rams

Isaac Chalupa competed his senior season for South Haven.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Isaac Chalupa is very versatile athlete for South Haven in soccer, baskerball and baseball. He recently helped his South Haven soccer team become state runners-up

"Being unsure of how the season would go at the beginning, the growth I have seen over the season, and where we got to making it to the state finals, we did very good," Chalupa said. "We had our ups and downs, but in the end, we played how we needed to play when it came to districts and every game after that.

"Being only my second year of soccer this year, I knew with this team I was going to have to step it up and be a leader on and off the field. I knew that I would have to prepare myself for the season ahead and every game that came with that. Due to that, I put my best effort into every practice and game. The very outcome that came from that is I impressed myself playing center back and right back and performing quite well this season.

"From when I first started playing soccer last year to this year now in high school, I clearly can see the improvement in myself and the good change that has come from working hard. I improved greatly all around in soccer, but really, in my defense, as that is the area I require most in games. Along with that, my footwork, dribbling, and quickness were very noticeably improved." Chalupa was named team captain early on with two other teammates.

"My role was to make sure that I would communicate and be a leader within the team," he said. "I had to make sure that everyone was focused and ready to play. Along with that, also make sure to defensively lock down on the back line with my other defenders.y role is definitely different this year. As I am more experienced and more prepared than I was last year, I can actually understand the game this year and use that to my advantage when it comes to playing. I can better communicate with my teammates on the field about when to shift and when overall to make the right movement that will benefit us.

"My height and athleticism let me jump higher and move faster than some other players, leading me to reach the ball sooner than others might, along with being able to defensively stay on a player that I am guarding Definitely coming into soccer, I didn't have much all-around skill. So I worked on being able to touch the soccer ball, along with being able to solidly pass the ball with confidence. Dribbling skills were also highly required, so I worked on being able to handle the ball with my feet."

As for top moments,, "my highlights for myself this season were coming into action when needed in certain games and playing the defense that was needed to have an advantage over teams, Chalupa said. "The games where I remember this most fondly include beating Vicksburg, where was able to prevent the ball towards the end of the game from coming too close to our goal along with preventing anything else from being scored.

"With this historic season, there were multiple highlights throughout the past few months of playing. However, as we entered districts, each game we had played from that point out was very memorable as they were all against teams that were higher ranked than us and we won each game mostly by a last-chance goal, which gave us the edge each time and carried us on to the next game until we reached the state finals. Such as us scoring on Paw Paw, Fenville, Northpointe Christian, and Fremont, all in the last five minutes of the game. Along with scoring in the last five minutes of overtime against Grand Rapids Catholic Central."

Chalupa added, "As a player, I felt that I did what I needed to do in order for are team to go as far as we did. Being team captain and part of the defense, we knew that we could clear balls and make sure balls wouldn't surpass that; we just needed to make sure we could execute this. I definitely feel like I met what I could do, along with making sure the defensive line would serve its purpose. "As part of the team, we definitely exceeded expectations of how far we went as we went into districts; the teams we faced off against were all higher ranks, and it was definitely a little bit discouraging. But we played how we knew we could play, and we knew we could compete with every team we would face off against due to knowing we had something special as a team, and we carried that all the way through until the end against Detroit Country Day. "Along with soccer, I also play basketball in the winter and baseball in the spring. I have a strong love and purpose for all the sports that I play, and I can never really decide, as they all mean so much to me and make up a huge part of my personality. They are all truly unique in their own way and have a special place in my life. Baseball is definitely my best sport as I have played that the longest. Since soccer season has come to an end, I plan on jumping right into the winter sports season and playing basketball. I am very excited for this year and have high expectations for myself and our team."

Lady Vikings fall in regionals

Bangor won the volleyball district title earlier this month.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — Bangor's volleyball team finished the season at 28-6-2 after losing to No. 6-ranked Kalamazoo Central in the regional semifinals on Nov. 11 by scores of 25-16, 25-14, 25-7/

The previous week, the Lady Vikings hosted the District 77 Tournament.

On Wednesday (Nov. 5), the Vikings faced off against the Bloomingdale Cardinals, winning the match in decisive fashion with scores of 25-17, 25-12, and 25-3.

On Friday, the Lady Vikings battled Watervliet for the District Championship. They came out strong, taking the first two sets 25-14 and 25-12. After a slow start in the third set, the Vikings fought hard to close the gap but ultimately fell 23-25.Regrouping after that setback, the Vikings once again came out determined in the fourth set, defeating the Panthers 25-17 to win the match and reclaim the District Championship title.

"The entire team contributed to the week's success, from the players on the court to the JV athletes who were moved up to join the postseason run. The energy, teamwork, and support for one another both on and off the court have been game changers for this group," coach Rickyna Luter said.

]Key Stats for District Week:

Samantha Ogrodny- 27 Kills and 3 Blocks

Bellah Gray- 23 Kills and 1 Block

Emily Wisniewski- 20 kills, 32 Digs, and 100% from the Service line

Alexis Wisniewsksi- 69 Assists

Savannah Marfia- 31 digs, 1 block, and a 2.23 Serve Receive Rating

Gobles player going to Cleary

Among Daisy Jackson's softball positions is catcher. She has committed to playing collegiately at Cleary State University.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

GOBLES— It's been a busy sports year for Gobles' Daisy Jackson and it's only going to get busier.

Jackson played travel softball during the summer and is now getting ready for her senior basketball season at Gobles. Practices start on Nov. 19.

"I've been doing travel softball and summer basketball things," Jackson said, adding she also attended a softball camp in Clearwater, Florida. "(Summer) was pretty busy. I committed to a college, which is exciting."

Jackson committed to Cleary University in Howell, Mich., for softball.

"The coaches are super nice," Jackson said. "It felt nice when I went for a visit there."

The spring season went well for Jackson and Gobles.

"We won districts as a team and individually I got the record for home runs in a season, 11," Jackson said. "I got All-State which is pretty awesome."

Jackson mainly pays shortstop and pitches and catches for the high school team along with third base. She considers shortstop is her best position, most likely.

"In the semifinals in districts, I hit an over-the-fence home run," Jackson said. "It was pretty cool. It was an absolute bomb. It was pretty awesome."

She has played three years of varsity softball at Gobles and acknowledged this would have been her best one.

Jackson attended some scrimmages with her high school basketball team during the summer. She was all-conference honorable mention last year.

"I'm normally a center or power forward, wherever my coach needs me," Jackson said.

Having committed already to a college softball program "was super important," Jackson said. "especially because a lot of 2026 graduates are committed to college. This was a huge relief to find a home with coaches who believe in me."

Former South Haven volleyball standout has fond memories

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Mony Amar-Newton has special memories of the South Haven volleyball program which celebrated its 50th anniversary this fall.

Amar-Newton started with the high school program in 1978 as a player. She graduated in 1981 and played three years on the varsity. Her team lost in the state semifinals in 1980.

She was a right side hitter for South Haven every year.

"I give credit to Dene Hadden," Amar Newton said. "He was a great coach. He had a really good program. He made us what we were. It was just fun. We had a great team."

The team was almost always competitive.

Amar-Newton won't soon forget 1980.

"It's just the whole season was fun and remarkable," he said. "We went to that last game which was a highlight, but we lost. It was a real close game. It went to overtime, 16-14. SO it was kind of a hard loss."

At that time, the season was in the winter and matches were best of 3 rather than best of five as they are today. Games were played to 15 rather 25 and teams only scored when they were serving.

"Dene Hayden, he's the one who made the program so incredible," Amar-Newton said. "When Dene left, the program did change."

Amar-Newton also play basketball at South Haven.

"I was better at volleyball," she said. "Basketball was fun but it didn't mean as much to me as the volleyball program."

Amar-Newton was all-conference three years volleyball and also earned all-state honors.

She played college volleyball at Kalamazoo College for two more years. She coached 12 years total, mostly with the junior high program at South Haven.

Amar-Newton lives in Kalamazoo during the summer and in Florida during the winter. She is retired.

VIEWPOINT

Thanksgiving is your time to express thanks

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

Thanksgiving has a way of arriving right when we need it most. After another year filled with the usual mix of noise—politics, inflation, crises abroad, and the ever-present rush of everyday life—this holiday stands as a rare invitation to stop, breathe, and take stock of what's still good and grounding in our lives. And despite all the turbulence in the world, there is plenty to be thankful for.

First and foremost, Thanksgiving reminds us of the value of community—something we often overlook. Whether our tables are surrounded by extended family, a small circle of friends, or just a few loved ones we consider family, the day is a reminder that relationships are what steady us. In a world where division is amplified, it's remarkable how a shared meal can bring people closer, soften disagreements, and restore a sense of belonging. The simple act of gathering around a table remains one of the most powerful expressions of togetherness.

We should also be thankful for the people who work quietly but tirelessly to keep our communities moving. Police officers, firefighters, EMTs, nurses, doctors, and hospital staff—many of whom won't get the day off—will spend Thanksgiving serving others. Grocery workers, truck drivers, farmers, and utility crews often go unnoticed, yet they form the backbone of our daily lives. I would be remiss to not include newspaper staffers such as delivery people, and reporters that work on Thanksgiving. Without them, the conveniences we take for granted wouldn't exist. Gratitude is owed not only on holidays, but it's worth saying clearly today.

There is also something to be said for appreciating the freedoms we enjoy. Regardless of political leanings, we live in a nation where disagreement is allowed, speech is free, and elections are decided by ballots, not bullets. At a time when many parts of the world are facing conflict and censorship, that's no small blessing. Thanksgiving gives us a chance to reflect on those freedoms and the men and women—past and present—who defend them.

And then there are the simple blessings, the ones most people don't realize they rely on until they're challenged: health, if we're fortunate enough to have it; shelter and warmth as the temperature drops; the ability to put food on the table; a job or career that provides stability; and the chance to wake up each day and start anew. Personally I have taken my health for granted, and I pray I can come to a realization as to how important it is. These aren't headlines; they're the quiet foundation of a good life.

Finally, Thanksgiving offers something rare in our fast-paced culture: perspective. For at least one day, we're encouraged to look not at what we lack, but at what we already have. Gratitude doesn't erase problems, but it reframes them. It reminds us that hope is justified, that progress is possible, and that even in difficult times, we're surrounded by more good than we often recognize.

So, as we carve the turkey, pass the mashed potatoes, or settle in to watch the Lions manhandle the Green Bay Packers, let's take a moment to acknowledge the things that truly matter. Our families. Amen. Our friends. Amen. Our freedoms. Amen. Our communities. Amen The opportunities we enjoy. And the countless people who work every day to make life better, safer, and more stable for the rest of us.

In a world that rarely pauses, Thanksgiving does. And that alone is something worth being thankful for. Please join me and millions of families, who give thanks for what we have on Thanksgiving Day. This Thursday is more than a food feast and football watch party. It is truly about being thankful for what we have.

Sheriff's Report- Two enclosed trailers with vehicles inside, recovered after reported stolen

Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Uniform Response handled a larceny of two enclosed trailers with two vehicles inside of them in Paw Paw Township. A suspect was developed, the property was recovered, and charges are being sought on the suspect.

Uniform Response handled a UDAA from a migrant camp in Columbia Township. The vehicle was later recovered in Allegan County after it was set on fire and burned. No suspects emerged during the investigation. Anyone with any information is asked to call our office at (269) 657-3101," said Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott.

Uniform Response assisted Benton Township with a pursuit that came into our county involving a Tesla. The vehicle exited the highway and was located by deputies abandoned. Two of the four occupants were located via drone and the other two were picked up by another vehicle. All four were accounted for, and the driver was lodged by Benton Township for the offense.

"Detectives from our office's CID Unit attended a two-day refresher training course on applicant background investigations for public safety employment. Positions in public safety - whether as a uniformed deputy, 911 dispatcher, or corrections staff, requires candidates to meet the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. Comprehensive background investigations are essential in maintaining public trust and safety, ensuring that only qualified individuals are selected to serve our community in these critical roles," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a UDAA from a residence in Keeler Township. An unknown individual described as wearing a hoodie, plaid jacket holding a backpack walked into a garage and stole a vehicle. "We did get a hit on a license plate reader in Indiana on the vehicle. The vehicle and suspect were later located in Kentucky. The suspect was lodged there and will face charges here. Arraignments are being made to get the vehicle back to Michigan," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a road rage incident in Bangor Township. Statements were taken and the report was sent to the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office for review.

Uniform Response handled a squatters Incident in Geneva Township. An individual moved into a camper on abandoned property. The property owner and deputies handled the situation.

Uniform Response handled a Vehicle versus pedestrian fatal traffic Crash in Porter Township. A 10-year-old was crossing the roadway after checking the mailbox in the morning prior to his bus arriving was struck by an oncoming vehicle. "The driver of the vehicle was unable to avoid the crash and called 911 immediately. Life saving measures were done at the scene and at the hospital, but unfortunately the child lost his life," said Sheriff Abbott. Once the investigation is complete, it'll be sent to the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office for review.

Do you need help? Write Us!

Mike Wilcox
Owner/Publisher

Every year, as the Christmas season draws near, I'm reminded just how generous our communities can be. For nearly two decades, Wilcox Newspapers has hosted what's become one of my favorite traditions: our Annual Christmas Wish Program.

It started simply enough. We asked readers who were struggling to write in and tell us what would make their Christmas a little brighter. The idea was to connect local families in need with local people who wanted to help. Over the years, it's grown into something truly special—and this year, we're doing it again.

Lately, I've heard from more families than ever who are struggling to make ends meet. The rising cost of everyday necessities, from groceries and gas to rent and utilities, has stretched household budgets thin. It's been a tough year for a lot of people, and many are finding themselves in need of a little extra help just to get by.

If you or your family are going through a difficult time, I encourage you to write to us and be as specific as you can. Tell us about your situation, your family, and how we might help make your holiday a little brighter. Most importantly, explain why you need our help. We prefer you email us at wilcoxnewspapers@gmail.com, but if you don't have access to a computer, you can always mail a letter to P.O. Box 189, Allegan, MI 49010.

Over the years, I've been amazed at the generosity that pours in from our readers and advertisers. One afternoon, while vacuuming our new office, I noticed an envelope on the floor. Inside were ten $100 bills—no note, no name, just a quiet act of kindness from someone who wanted to help. Another time, a donor sent $2,000. Several more gave $1,000 each. For a Scrooge like me, it's humbling to see just how deeply people here care for one another.

Last year alone, we were able to raise more than $20,000 in cash and gifts, helping over 70 families enjoy the holidays. This year, our goal is even higher. We hope to assist at least 100 families within our circulation areas.

I've always believed in the saying, "We take care of our own," and nowhere is that truer than in the communities we serve. So, if you legitimately need help this Christmas, and I stress LEGITIMATELY, please reach out to us. And if you're in a position to give, know that your generosity can change someone's holiday, and maybe their outlook on life, for the better.

OBITUARY

Dixie Mae Schauer

Dixie Mae Schauer, 89, of Paw Paw, passed away peacefully on Wednesday morning, Nov. 12, 2025, at Bronson South Haven. She was born Aug. 11, 1936, in South Bend, Indiana, the daughter of Walter Mahar and Margaret A. (Peters) Mahar.

She is survived by her husband, Paul Joseph Schauer; daughter, Mary Strand; grandchildren, Taylor Schauer, Cory Strand, Sydney Schauer, Casey (Jesi) Wallace, Cameron (Alexi) Strand, Jessica (Chris) Madill and Joshua (Paige) Schauer, and many great- grandchildren.

Dixie was preceded in death by her parents and sons, Joseph Schauer and Paul Schauer.

Cremation will take place. There will be a celebration of Dixie's life in August 2026.

When I Quit
"When I quit this martial shore
And mosey 'round this earth no more,
Don't weep, don't sigh, don't grieve, don't sob;
I may have struck a better job.
Don't go and buy a large bouquet,
For which you'll find it hard to pay;
Don't hang around me feeling blue;
I may be better off than you.
Don't tell folks that I was a saint
Or anything you know I ain't;
If you have stuff like that to spread,
Please hand it out before I'm dead.
If you have roses, bless your soul,
Just pin one on my buttonhole;
But do it while I'm at my best,
Instead of when I'm safe at rest."

Arrangements by Adams Funeral Home and Cremation Services, 502 West Michigan Ave., Paw Paw.

Friend of the Court warrant recall days set

The Van Buren County Friend of the Court is helping parents get on the path of paying and staying current on child support. The Friend of the Court will be holding the following Warrant Recall Events for FOC Bench Warrants and DNR License Suspensions:

Tuesday, December 2, 2025, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Paw Paw Library

Tuesday, December 2, 2025, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Decatur Webster Memorial Library

Thursday, December 11, 2025, from 9:00 – 1:00 pm AND 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Decatur Webster Memorial Library

Friday, December 12, 2025, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Hartford Library

Active child support bench warrants will be recalled and DNR license suspensions will be reinstated if payers go to FOC Warrant Recall Day prepared to make a payment.

Resources will be available on FOC Warrant Recall Day to help with public benefits, community programs, and employment services. Self-help forms will be available, and staff may be able to help you modify your child support.

Call (269) 657-7734 for details about FOC Warrant Recall Day.

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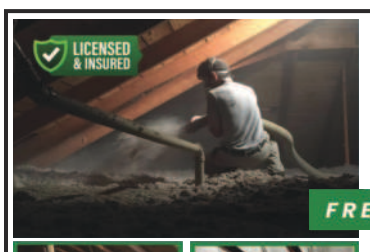

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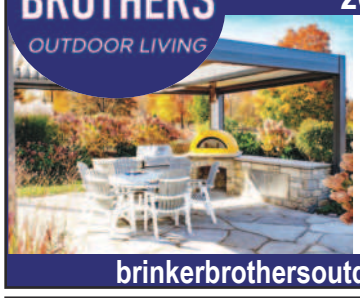

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Regular Meeting
October 8, 2025

Supervisor Oxley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present – Oxley, Bitely, Nesbitt, Packer, and Smith. Also present – Attorney Moraitis and four guests.

- Motion by Packer with support by Bitely to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on September 10, 2025. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Packer to approve the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Nesbitt with support by Packer to approve the bills as presented. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Smith with support by Nesbitt to approve the PA116 farmland application submitted by Ed and Kelly Reed. Voice call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Smith with support by Nesbitt to amend the general budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 in summary form. Total revenue of $1,137,290 less total expenditures of $1,481,904 for a net decrease in fund balance of $344,614. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Packer to approve the change work order on township hall addition to upgrade vinyl siding to steel siding, and also to re-shingle and re-side existing township hall building with steel to match, at a cost not to exceed $63,750. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Packer to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heather Smith
Porter Township Clerk

State of Michigan
Probate Court
County of Van Buren
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING
File No. 20252108GM & 20252109 GM

In the matter of **Jude Vaughn Wagner & Lila True Howell**
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including: Corina Brizeno, Seth Wagner & Jackie Howell
whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on December 11,2025 at 10:30 A.M. at Van Buren County Probate Court, Courtroom #3 before Judge Susan Metzger #P62867 for the following purpose:
Guardianship Appointment of Minor Children.
Date: 11/05/2025
Petitioner Name
Sierra Sibbersen
25184 36th St.
Gobles, MI 49055
(269)364-9119

State of Michigan
Probate Court
County of Van Buren
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING
File No. 20252107 GM

In the matter of **Jayden Nova Caramer**
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including: **Adrian Cramer** whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on **Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at Van Buren County Probate Court, Courtroom #3 before Judge Susan Metzger P62867** for the following purpose:
Guardianship appointment of a minor child
Date: 11/04/2025
Petitioner Name:
Thomas Labadie, Dr.
53251 Kathryn Rd.,
Paw Paw Mi 49079
(269)655-7433

State of Michigan
Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 2025-1160-DE
ESTATE OF DONALD W. TOLLENSDORF, DECEASED
DATE OF BIRTH DECEMBER 30, 1933 (12/30/1933)
TO ALL CREDITORS: NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Donald W. Tollensdorf, died August 9,2025 (8/9/2025).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims aginst the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Mark Tollensdorf & Donna Zeppiero, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Suite 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Date:11/14/2025
Atterney:
Andrew W. Barnes
#P70571
317 Center Street
South Haven, MI 49090
269-287-2010
Personal representative(s):
Mark Tollensdorf
6099 Strawberry Circle
Commerce, MI 48382
&
Donna Zeppiero
76641 11th Ave.
South Haven, MI
616-405-3556

NOTICE: THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE VAN BUREN COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY AND ARE SUBJECT TO AN EXPEDITED QUIET TITLE AND FORECLOSURE ACTION. OWNERS OR PERSONS WITH INFORMATION REGARDING THE PRIOR OWNER OF THE PROPERTIES ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE LAND BANK AUTHORITY AT 219 E PAW PAW ST, PAW PAW, MI 49079 OR BY PHONE AT (269) 657-8228.
On November 06, 2025 the Van Buren County Land Bank Authority filed Case Number 2025-075297-CZ in the Van Buren County Circuit Court, a petition to quiet title.
The Van Buren County Land Bank Authority currently holds title to each property listed below. **A HEARING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY DECEMBER 15, 2025 AT 1:30 PM WHICH YOU MAY ATTEND.** The hearing will be held before the Honorable Susan Metzger via Zoom. **The Zoom Meeting ID is ID 277 444 5820.**
If the petition is granted, **FEE SIMPLE TITLE TO EACH PROPERTY LISTED BELOW WILL VEST ABSOLUTELY IN THE VAN BUREN COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY** and your interest, if any, and all other interests will **BE LOST WITH NO RIGHT OF REDEMPTION.**
If you wish to contest the vesting of absolute title in the Van Buren County Land Bank Authority, you should file a written objection to the petition with the clerk of the Van Buren County Circuit Court and serve the objection on the Van Buren County Land Bank Authority and its attorney, Lucas Middleton, at 222 N Kalamazoo Mall, STE 100, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 before the hearing date listed above.
LIST OF PROPERTIES AND PARTIES OF INTEREST
Parcel Number: 80-10-014-016-00
Address: 84TH AVE, DECATUR
Legal Description: 140 14-4-15 BEG AT SE COR OF SEC, TH N ALG E SEC L TO A PT 2025.53' S OF E 1/4 PT OF SD SEC, TH N 88 DEG 34' 33" W 653.59' TO E L OF SW 1/4 SE 1/4 SE 1/4 OF SD SEC, TH S ALG SD E L TO S SEC L, TH E ALG SD S SEC L TO BEG OF DES.
Parties of Interest: HELEN MARIE RYBARSKI; HELEN MARIE RYBARSKI (ESTATE); Any heir, devisee, or other party who may claim an interest in the Estate of Helen Marie Rybarski.

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Wesley B Ready Jr; Atty: Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. - Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C.; 1st Pub: 10/30/2025; Atty File #: 24MI00680-2; Insurer: (unknown)
FORECLOSURE NOTICE
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, December 4, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Wesley B Ready Jr. and Teresa Taylor-Ready, Husband and Wife to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Primelending, A Plainscapital Company , its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated September 30, 2021, and recorded on October 12, 2021, in Liber 1727, Page 298, Van Buren County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated April 23, 2025 and recorded April 23, 2025 in Liber 1778, Page 114, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Two Hundred Two Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Two and 07/100 ($202,892.07) including interest at the rate of 3.62500% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of Bloomingdale, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as:
Beginning at the center of Section 21, Town 1 South, Range 14 West; Thence North 89 degrees 21 minutes 05 seconds West on the East and West 1/4 line 305.00 feet; Thence North parallel with the North and South 1/4 line, 385 feet; Thence South 89 degrees 21 minutes 05 seconds East parallel with the East and West 1/4 line 305.00 feet to the North and South 1/4 line, Thence South on same, 385.00 feet to the place of beginning. Commonly known as: 13756 41ST ST, BLOOMINGDALE, MI 49026
If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later.
If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: October 30, 2025 Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 24MI00680-2
(10-30)(11-20)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Nancy M. Dubois; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 11/6/2025; Atty File #: 25-012980; Insurer: GNMA
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on DECEMBER 4, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Nancy M. DuBois, a married woman, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Amerifirst Financial Corporation, Mortgagee, dated August 6, 2018 and recorded August 10, 2018 in Liber 1672, Page 378 and Loan Modification Agreement recorded on May 13, 2020, in Liber 1700, Page 95, Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Forty-Three Thousand Five Hundred Twenty-Six and 25/100 Dollars ($143,526.25).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on DECEMBER 4, 2025.
Said premises are located in the Village of Paw Paw, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Lots 4 and 5, Block 3 of Marcelletti's Addition to the Village of Paw Paw, according to the recorded Plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 4 of Plats, Page 9, and amended by Order of the Circuit Court as recorded in Liber 503, Page 121, Van Buren County Records.
501 Marcelletti Ave, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: November 6, 2025
File No. 25-012980
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(11-06)(11-27)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Mariah Cutlip; Atty: Team X; 1st Pub: 11/6/2025; Atty File #: 526641F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on December 11, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Mariah A. Cutlip and Wyman P. Cutlip, wife and husband
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Freedom Mortgage Corporation
Date of Mortgage: November 22, 2019
Date of Mortgage Recording: December 2, 2019
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $108,507.76
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Decatur, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The West 181.5 feet of the East 544.5 feet of South 231 feet of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 17. Town 4 South, Range 14 West, Decatur Township Van Buren County, Michigan.
Common street address (if any): 42658 82nd Ave, Decatur, MI 49045-9175
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: November 6, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1576398
(11-06)(11-27)

Van Buren; Mtgr: Thomas E Demarest; Atty: Shaheen - Shaheen Jacobs & Ross PC; 1st Pub: 11/13/2025; Atty File #: (N/A); Insurer: (unknown)
FORECLOSURE NOTICE (Van Buren County) NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County (at the front steps of the Courthouse in Paw Paw, Michigan), starting promptly at 1:00 o'clock P.M. on Thursday, December 18, 2025. Default has been made in the terms and conditions of the mortgage made by Thomas E. Demarest and Crystalle Demarest, husband and wife, as original mortgagors, to The Huntington National Bank, a national banking association, as original mortgagee, dated August 28, 2018, and recorded on September 18, 2018, at the Van Buren County, Michigan Register of Deeds, in Liber 1673, commencing on Page 936. The amount claimed to be due on this mortgage, on the date of this notice, was $380,188.36. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. The description of the mortgaged premises is all that certain piece or parcel of

Continues on page 9

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PAW PAW TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

The Paw Paw Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the following request. The public is invited to comment on the matter.

Application:
- Request: Special land use and site plan for a detached accessory building (garage) to be constructed with a two-foot setback from the northern property line along the Hillside Avenue right-of-way (requesting a reduction of 48 feet).
- Zoning District: VE
- Project Address: 34055 Hillside Drive, Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Project Parcel Number: 80-14-424-007-10
- Applicant: Charles Sanders (Golden Construction)

Meeting Information:
- Location: Paw Paw Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St., Paw Paw, MI, 49079
- Date: December 16, 2025
- Time: 7:00 PM (meeting begins at 5:30 PM for Township master plan discussion, but consideration of this project will begin no earlier than 7:00 PM)
- Hearing and project information: call 269-657-4340 or email clerk@pawpawtownship.org

Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Planning Commission Chair at the Township Hall address listed above by 4:00 PM on the meeting date. If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in the hearing, please notify the Township at least five (5) days prior to the hearing so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PAW PAW TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

The Paw Paw Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the following request. The public is invited to comment on the matter.

Application:
- Request: Special land use and site plan for a detached accessory building (garage) to be constructed with a reduced nine-foot north side setback (requesting a reduction of 31 feet) and an increased height of 21 feet (requesting an increase of three feet) as well as a second detached accessory building (garage) to be constructed with a reduced nine-foot north side setback (requesting a reduction of 31 feet) at a height of 17 feet.
- Zoning District: ARR
- Project Address: 55810 39th Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Project Parcel Number: 80-14-010-017-00
- Applicant: Forest J. Wright

Meeting Information:
- Location: Paw Paw Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St., Paw Paw, MI, 49079
- Date: December 16, 2025
- Time: 7:00 PM (meeting begins at 5:30 PM for Township master plan discussion, but consideration of this project will begin no earlier than 7:00 PM)
- Hearing and project information: call 269-657-4340 or email clerk@pawpawtownship.org

Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Planning Commission Chair at the Township Hall address listed above by 4:00 PM on the meeting date. If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in the hearing, please notify the Township at least five (5) days prior to the hearing so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PAW PAW TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Paw Paw Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing regarding the following request. The public is invited to comment on the matter.

Application:
- Request: Variance for a new home to be constructed with a five-foot side setback instead of the required 15-foot minimum side setback and a 43-foot waterfront setback instead of the required 50-foot minimum waterfront setback. The variance request relates to Chapter 42, Article 6, Attachment 3 of the Paw Paw Township Zoning Ordinance (dimensional requirements).
- Zoning District: Waterfront Area (WFR)
- Project Address: 35321 51st Avenue, Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Project Parcel Number: 80-14-714-001-00; 80-14-713-008-00
- Applicant: Caleb Stout (Anchored Builders)

Meeting Information:
- Location: Paw Paw Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St., Paw Paw, MI, 49079
- Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025
- Time: 7:00 PM
- Hearing and project information: call 269-657-4340 or email clerk@pawpawtownship.org

Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Zoning Board of Appeals Chair at the Township Hall address listed above by 4:00 PM on the meeting date. If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in the hearing, please notify the Township at least five (5) days prior to the hearing so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

Continues from page 8

land situated in the Township of Paw Paw, in the County of Van Buren and State of Michigan further described as follows: Part of the Northeast fractional 1/4 of fractional section 2, Town 3 South, Range 14 West, described as commencing at the North 1/4 post of said Section 2; thence East along the North line of said Section, 301.01 feet to the point of beginning of the land herein described; thence continuing East along said North line 614.03 feet to the Northwest corner of the plat of Green Meadow Highlands, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber 7 of Plats, Page 83 of Van Buren County Records; thence South 00 degrees 36 minutes 17 seconds West, along the East line of said plat and its extension Southerly thereof, 957.59 feet; thence North 89 degrees 28 minutes 10 seconds West, parallel with the South line of the North fractional 1/2 of said Northeast fractional 1/4, 34.00 feet; thence South 00 degrees 36 minutes 17 seconds West, 500.00 feet to said South line; thence North 89 degrees 28 minutes 10 seconds West, along said South line, 80.00 feet; thence North 00 degrees 36 minutes 17 seconds East 500.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 28 minutes 10 seconds West, parallel with the South line of the North fractional 1/2 of said Northeast fractional 1/4, 434.00 feet; thence South 00 degrees 36 minutes 17 seconds West, 500.00 feet to said South line, thence North 89 degrees 28 minutes 10 seconds West, along said South line, 66.00 feet; thence North 00 degrees 36 minutes 17 seconds East, 1451.90 feet to the place of beginning. Commonly known as: 36862 49th Ave., Paw Paw, MI The redemption period shall be Six (6) months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be thirty (30) days from the date of such sale or when the time to provide the notice required by MCLA 600.3241a(c) expires, whichever is later or unless the redemption period is shortened in accordance with MCLA 600.3238. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, under MCLA 600.3278, the borrower and mortgagor will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Attention Purchasers: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Shaheen, Jacobs & Ross, P.C. is a debt collector attempting to collect this debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. Dated: November 6, 2025 The Huntington National Bank, a national banking association Mortgagee SHAHEEN, JACOBS & ROSS, P.C. By: Michael J. Thomas, Esq. Attorneys for Mortgagee 615 Griswold Street, Suite 1425 Detroit, Michigan 48226-3993 (313) 963-1301

(11-13)(12-04)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: John F Crawford; Atty: Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. - Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C.; 1st Pub: 11/20/2025; Atty File #: 25MI00779-1; Insurer: (unknown)

FORECLOSURE NOTICE

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, December 18, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by John F. Crawford, a single man to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Amerifirst Financial Corporation, its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated September 5, 2019, and recorded on September 20, 2019, in Liber 1689, Page 612, Van Buren County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated October 22, 2025 and recorded October 29, 2025 in Liber 1785, Page 493, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Twenty-Nine Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Five and 90/100 ($29,655.90) including interest at the rate of 5.75000% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of HAMILTON, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as: Lots 34 and 35, Supervisor`s Plat Of Ackley Beach, as recorded in Liber 1, Page 29, Van Buren County Records. Commonly known as: 46800 EAST DR, DECATUR, MI 49045 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: November 20, 2025 Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 25MI00779-1

(11-20)(12-11)

SCHEDULE A FALL LEAF CLEANUP.
Curbside pick-up available
Free Estimates.
Senior Discount.
Call Anthony, 269-599-9528.

BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP NOW ACCEPTING BIDS

Bloomingdale Township is currently accepting bids for Janitorial Services Contractor at the Bloomingdale Municipal Center. Interested parties will need to be licensed and insured. Please contact Supervisor Matt Ashbrook or Clerk Melanie Kelly for project details. Please mail sealed bids to Bloomingdale Township, PO Box 11, Bloomingdale, MI 49026. Or, hand deliver to drop box or office located at 109 E. Kalamazoo St., Bloomingdale, MI 49026

Melanie Kelly, Bloomingdale Township Clerk

PORTER TOWNSHIP -- VAN BUREN COUNTY NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSAL

Porter Township is requesting bid proposals for snow removal at the Porter Township Hall premises, at 88040 M-40 Highway, Lawton, Michigan.

Scope of Work

Each SEALED PROPOSAL shall include bids for the following work:

1. TOWNSHIP HALL Parking Lots.

Each snow event that produces a minimum of 1 inch accumulation, and every additional 1 inch of accumulation thereafter, shall be removed by the Contractor and a de-icer shall be applied as needed. Snow accumulation as a result of wind conditions, causing drifting in excess of 1½ inches, shall be removed and a de-icer shall be applied per time. Ice of any depth shall also receive a de-icer.

Cost per time Snow Removal Total $ _____

Cost per time Salt/De-icer Total $ _____

Other Requirements.

Snow and/or ice removal shall ensure accessibility of all **mailboxes,** overhead doors, and **dumpsters.**

Service Timing.

All snow removal and deicer application(s) shall be performed prior to **8:00 a.m.** and shall be repeated as often as necessary to maintain safe conditions and ensure accumulations do not exceed 1½ inches during hours of operation **(24 hours a day / 7 days a week).**

Additional Notes.

- Absolutely no sand and/or equivalent products shall be used as deicer.
- **Sidewalk snow removal is not included** in this bid request due to the property's existing snow melt system.
- **Local Preference:** Preference may be given to bids submitted by local residents or businesses, as determined by the Board.

2. TOWNSHIP CEMETERIES

Each snow event that produces a minimum of 4 inches of snow shall be removed by the Contractor from the following cemeteries:

Chamberlin Cemetery - 77860 M-40, Lawton
Kern Cemetery - 22447 80th Ave., Lawton

In addition, contractor shall remove snow as needed for funerals.

- **Local Preference:** Preference may be given to bids submitted by local residents or businesses, as determined by the Board.

Proposal Due Date: DECEMBER 9, 2025, AT NOON

Copies of the proposals can be sent to or dropped off at the Porter Township Hall located at 88040 M-40 Highway, Lawton, Michigan, or emailed to the Clerk at *clerk@portertwpvbco.gov.*

Estimated Time Line:

Township Board to open sealed bids Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 6:45pm, Porter Township Hall

Paw Paw VFW presents check to Blue Star Mothers

Jim Alden, right, Paw Paw Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2532 Commander, presents Cindy Alderman, a member of the Blue Star Mothers of America Southwest Michigan Chapter 179, with a check for $1,400. The money will be used to cover costs for the "Operation Holiday Cheer" event held Nov. 8, at the Paw Paw Lions Club. Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

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The Van Buren Intermediate School District is now accepting bids to replace multiple doors throughout Van Buren Intermediate School District buildings as outlined in the bid packet. Bid packets are available for download at *www.vbisd.org* under District Services – Business Office. Bids are due **December 1, 2025, at 2:00 PM** at the Van Buren Intermediate School District Business Office, 490 S. Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted and returned unopened. The Board of Education shall not accept a bid unless it includes both sworn and notarized familial affidavit and Iran linked business affidavit. The Van Buren Intermediate School District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any irregularities which it deems to be in the best interest of Van Buren Intermediate School District, and the right to award the contract to other than lowest bidder.

BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP INVITATION TO BID

The Township of Bloomingdale will be accepting sealed bids for Seasonal Mowing/ Plowing of the listed properties for 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 seasons. This will be a two-year contract beginning April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2028. Bids should also include Seasonal Snowplowing of the Fire Station property, Bear Lake access, Muskrat Lake access, Mud Lake Drive, and the Municipal Building parking lot behind the building for the 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 seasons.

Plowing

- Plow Fire Station whenever 3 inches or more of snow falls.
- Plow Muskrat and Bear Lake Fire Lane accesses whenever 6 inches of snow falls.
- Plow Mud Lake Drive whenever 3 inches or more of snow falls.
- Plow back parking lot of Municipal Building whenever 3 inches or more of snow falls.
- Front and sidewalks of Municipal Building must be shoveled whenever 3 inches of snow falls

Mowing

- Mowing Fire Station when grass reaches between 3-4 inches
- Spring and Fall Clean-up at Fire Station

The Township Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids. Bids must be listed at a per year rate for both mowing and plowing. Proof of Insurance must be provided with bid. Bids will be opened and contract awarded during the Regular Board Meeting of Bloomingdale Township Board at 7:00 p.m., December 17, 2025.

Send (or drop off) sealed bids to Bloomingdale Township office by 12:00 p.m. on December 17, 2025. For more information, contact the Bloomingdale Township office, 109 E. Kalamazoo Street, P.O. Box 11, Bloomingdale, MI 49026, or by phone Matthew Ashbrook (269) 521-3800 ext. 1.

Melanie Kelly, Clerk

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Area schools pay tribute to Veterans Day

Paw Paw and Mattawan Middle Schools held programs to honor area veterans on Veterans Day Nov. 11. Both schools also provided a free breakfast for area service men and women.
Photos courtesy Paw Paw Public Schools and Mattawan Consolidated School.

Paw Paw Middle School Principal Jerry McDaniel and Air Force veteran Don Brown at Paw Paw Mddle School Veterans Day program

Concrete poured at Briggs Dam

Construction workers are shown at Briggs Dam in Paw Paw as concrete was recently poured at the site. According to Paw Paw Village Manager Bryan Myrkle, the Briggs Dam replacement project remains on schedule for substantial completion by the end of the year. Excavation work is complete, and the project is moving from the 'tearing down' phase to the 'building up' phase. The new wooden bridge is expected to be delivered and installed in mid-December. Final site clean-up will take place in the spring. Photo courtesy/Village of Paw Paw

Lawton gears up for holiday season

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

LAWTON – The Village of Lawton will celebrate the upcoming Christmas season on December 12, hosted by the Lawton Lions Club, following action Tuesday, Nov. 11, by the Lawton Village Council.

Heather Shannon asked for Lawton Village Council approval to have the Village Christmas Tree placed in Reid's Corner for the Christmas in the Village Celebration that will be held Friday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. This year's Christmas tree was donated by the Stermer Family. The Lawton Downtown Development Authority (DDA) expressed its thanks to the family for the "generous donation."

The Lawton Village Council approved a letter from Vicki Mrozek asking the Village of Lawton for permission from the Lawton Lions Club to host the annual Christmas in the Village Celebration, with a parade, burn barrels, use of the Lawton Fire Department building for refreshments, and use of the Village of Lawton community room for Santa visits. She also asked the village council for traffic control on Dec. 12, beginning at 7 p.m.

The village council approved a conflict-of-interest waiver to be signed by Lawton Village Manager Todd Hackenberg. Village Council President Appleby brought the conflict-of-interest waiver from Antwerp Township to the floor for discussion. The waiver is due to an ongoing issue between the Village of Lawton and Antwerp Township for the Village of Lawton Police Department to be allowed to use village-owned property to train officers. The township has made the determination that the police may not shoot on this property, stating more than one person may not shoot on their privately-owned property.

Antwerp Township will hold a public hearing to decide whether to overturn their decision and allow the police to train on this property on Dec. 2. The waiver is due because Antwerp Township utilizes the same attorney as the village's blight/rental inspection company, Zoning Solutions.

During Citizen's Comments, Heather Shannon informed the village council that the Summerfest Committee plans to hold next year's Summerfest on July 11, with current plans for an all-day event, including the return of a car show, and music by Hair Mania.

Donna Dluge, Lawton DDA member, said she has been working with Kelly Kozik to prepare decorations for downtown Main Street.

Calvin Ragan, of 420 Ewing Road, asked the village council why the new downstown streetscape does not include a bicycle lane, and asked where bicyclists are supposed to go. He also wanted to know the cost of the streetscape project.

The Lawton Village Council approved a resolution brought to the floor from Lawton Village Council President Josh Appleby. The resolution establishes a contract between the Village of Lawton and Living Waters Dominion, LLC, to operate the Wastewater Treatment Plant in lieu of an employee.

The council approved a resolution presented by Village Council President calling for the adoption of a new policy to the Village of Lawton Employee Handbook. The new policy that allows the village to be in line with ESTA guidance.

The village council approved a Letter of Agreement between Teamsters Local 214 and the Village of Lawton. The Letter of Agreement showed Village of Lawton Police Department wages raised, effective Oct. 9, 2024. These communications were sent to the union, and union dues were raised with police rates, however, the LOA was missed and was now being corrected for both village and union records.

The village council approved Ordinance 05 of 2025, as recommended by the Village of Lawton Planning Commission that would make several minor corrections to the current Zoning Ordinances.

Lawton Village Manager Hackenberg said Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is not responding back to him about items with sidewalk repairs needed on Main Street, He said that he has now put in a request with a higher authority. He said it does not appear that a timeline was provided for the Washington project rebuild.

Hackenberg said he has been working on the village Parks and Rec plan and would like to do another public survey to seek the public's opinion on future park use.

Hackenberg told the village council that with the state's new budget, revenue sharing for cities, villages, townships, etc. has decreased. The state is reducing the Constitutional Revenues by approximately six percent. The gas tax is being phased out.

With that, Hackenberg said it means approximately a $5,000-$6,000 cut for general village funding. The state has started a new public safety revenue sharing for the next five years; however, the Village of Lawton will probably not qualify as it is for larger populations, populations with high crime rates, or populations with inverted property values.

Hackenberg said the village will see an increase in road funding, however those are restricted funds, as to where the constitutional revenues are unrestricted funds. Hackenberg said he would like to look at the village budget year to July 1-June 30, because it would put the village more in line with the state and the township's fiscal year, simplify the budgeting process, and help with projections. With village council agreement, Hackenberg will look further into how this can be accomplished for the village.

Village Council member Judy Peterson told the village council that the Planning Commission met and elected new officers. Paul Rathbun is the new chair, Sue Knudstrup, vice chair, and Phillip Chmiel, secretary. Council member Peterson will remain council liaison.

The Lawton DDA and village council will hold a joint meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 25.

Village Council President Appleby said the village council wants to get together soon to discuss the future of the village council. Village Manager Hackenberg said he has reached out to MSU Extension and Lou Bender, who focuses on municipalities. Appleby said the village can look at saving funds in trying to hold this meeting on their own, or if anyone has suggestions on other local facilitators. Council member Peterson suggested reaching out to Western Michigan University's Public Service program for more options.

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